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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 2001, the mayor of Anchorage (Alaska) created a task force to develop recommendations to help heal racism in Anchorage. A series of focus groups were held throughout the community to obtain an assessment of attitudes and opinions about the quality of life in Anchorage from the perspective of different racial groups and to solicit recommendations for improving race relations in the community. Issues discussed include education, public safety, housing, and employment. Hispanics felt that education was good, getting loans for housing was difficult, and most jobs had little opportunity for advancement. African Americans felt there was still considerable discrimination in housing employment and education, although some felt that things were better than in other places or times. Asians gave education high marks, but felt the high cost of housing had a segregating effect. Safety was a common theme among Caucasians. Young Native women felt that access to housing employment and health care was improving, and that delivery of services by Native corporations was improving services. Older Natives noted that education and access to housing was improving, but Anchorage was not caring for the poor and needy. Education was very important to Pacific Islanders, who wished to see improvement in English-as-second language, math, and science programs. Perceptions of these groups concerning misunderstandings, discrimination, and how community is defined were also discussed. Recommendations and questions for further study are presented. Appendices present research methodology and materials. (TD)

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RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN ANCHORAGE

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prepared for

Municipality of Anchorage

November 19, 2001

University of Alaska Foundation
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RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN ANCHORAGE

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2001, the Mayor of Anchorage, George Wuerch, tasked a Kitchen Cabinet Task Force with the goal of developing recommendations to help heal racism in Anchorage. The Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of Alaska Anchorage agreed to assist the Task Force by conducting a series of focus groups in the community. The purpose of these focus groups was to obtain an assessment of attitudes and opinions about the quality of life in Anchorage from the perspective different racial groups and to solicit recommendations for improving race relations within the community.

ISER contracted with Craciun Research Group Incorporated to conduct the focus groups. Because of time and budget limitations the information presented in this report is based upon the preliminary notes taken at the time that the focus groups were conducted. A more detailed analysis of the focus groups, based on a review of the focus group transcripts, would add more depth and detail, but we feel the main ideas identified during the focus groups are described in this report.

We want to acknowledge and thank David Levy, the Executive director of the Equal Rights Commission, for his guidance and assistance throughout this project. We would also like to acknowledge the members of the mayor's Kitchen Cabinet Task Force for their assistance in identifying potential focus group participants. Finally we would like to thank the focus group participants for their willingness to participate in this important study.

Project funding was provided by an Understanding Alaska grant from the University of Alaska Foundation.

1. ANCHORAGE POPULATION TRENDS

RACIAL MINORITIES ARE AN INCREASING SHARE OF THE ANCHORAGE POPULATION

1990 1 in 5

2000 1 in 4

2010 1 in 3 (if present trend continues)

Broad categories of racial minorities defined by the US Census include Native American, African American, and Asian & Pacific Islander. (Detailed racial information from the 2000 US Census is not yet available. Furthermore some respondents to the 2000 Census reported more than one race. We use the Alaska Department of Labor "bridge series" which assigns these individuals to a single racial category.)

From 1991 to 2000 the minority enrollment in K-12 schools in Anchorage increased by 6,573--a 55% increase. Total enrollment increased only 4,784—an 11% increase. Consequently the racial-ethnic minority share of school enrollments (including Hispanics) increased from 27% to 38%.

GREAT DIVERSITY EXISTS AMONG THE MINORITY POPULATION

Native American	9%
Asian and Pacific Islander	8%
African American	7%

The Hispanic population, which can be of any race, was 6 % of the Anchorage population in 2000.

USA Today has developed a DIVERSITY INDEX that is the probability that two people chosen at random from the population have a different racial and ethnic background. In 2000 the INDEX for Anchorage was 50%--almost identical to the US Average of 49% (a one in two chance that two people chosen at random would have a different racial and ethnic background).

The highest DIVERSITY INDEX figures in Alaska were reported in the Aleutians (75%) and Kodiak (62%) Census Areas, and the lowest were in Wade Hampton (15%) and Matanuska Susitna Borough (25%).

In some states the INDEX is much lower. For example the statewide INDEX for Iowa was 14 in 2000.

ALASKA'S MINORITY POPULATION IS INCREASINGLY CONCENTRATED IN ANCHORAGE

Total state population share in Anchorage	42%
African American population share in Anchorage	69%
Asian & Pacific Islander population share in Anchorage	58%
Native American population share in Anchorage	22%

In contrast the Matanuska Susitna Borough has 10% of the state population, but only 2% of Black, 2% of the Asian and Pacific Islander, and 4% of the Native American population.

THE MINORITY POPULATION IS YOUNGER

Racial minority share of Anchorage population	24%
Racial minority share of K-12 Enrollment	31%

The Anchorage school district racial minority definition includes Black, Alaska Native, and Asian or Pacific Islander. Including Hispanics, the total racial and ethnic minority share was 38% in 2000.

2. THEMES FROM NATIONAL SURVEYS

NATIVE AMERICANS ARE GENERALLY NOT IDENTIFIED IN NATIONAL SURVEYS DEALING WITH RACIAL ISSUES

This is because nationally they are a smaller minority than other groups, in particular the African American and Hispanic populations.

DISCRIMINATION TODAY IS LESS BLATANT THAN IN THE PAST, BUT STILL PREVALENT

Racial profiling and discrimination on the job are prevalent and the "invisible slap" is commonplace. Bad service in restaurants and stores, belittling comments, people who act afraid or suspicious, and lack of respect are typical examples of subtle discrimination felt by 2/3 of Blacks and almost half of Hispanics and Asians.

WHITES AND MINORITIES HAVE DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS OF CONDITIONS OF MINORITIES

40-60% of Whites say the average Black American fares as well or better than the average White in the categories of jobs, income, schooling, and health care. In contrast government statistics show Blacks still lag significantly behind whites in all categories.

WHITES ARE POORLY INFORMED ABOUT THE FACTS SURROUNDING MINORITIES

Although African Americans comprise about 12 percent of the US population, White respondents to a national survey gave estimates of the African American share of the population that averaged 24 percent. This type of misconception may lie at the heart of some forms of racial tension. (The greater the perceived threat, the greater the incidence of racist behavior.)

3. FOCUS GROUPS

3.1 DESCRIPTION

Rationale: Focus groups provide an alternative to public hearings and surveys for an in depth exploration of attitudes and opinions in a non-threatening environment.

Composition of 8 groups:

1	Hispanic
1	African American
1	Caucasian
1	Asian
1	Pacific Islander
3	Alaska Native (grouped by age)

Objective: The objective was to obtain assessment of attitudes, opinions and experiences affecting quality of life in Anchorage and to elicit recommendations and suggestions for improving the quality of life

Participants: Participants do not represent a cross section or random sample of each ethnic or racial group. The selection process involved 2 steps. Step 1 was to gather lists of potential participants based on recommendations from community leaders, Kitchen Cabinet members, and other sources. The requirements were that potential participants not themselves be in political or activist leadership roles within the community and be willing to discuss racial and ethnic issues. From these lists individuals were selected to obtain a mix within each group of individuals by age, sex, occupation, and other categories (See methodological appendix for more detail).

Representation: The focus groups are not representative of their communities because they are not a random sample. Rather they provide a way to get in-depth information on attitudes and opinions from a subset of members of each community.

3.2 OBSERVATIONS

DIVERSITY WITHIN GROUPS

There was internal diversity among several of the groups. The Hispanic group shared a common language, but individuals came from many different countries. The Asian group had representatives from many different countries and did not share a common language. The Alaska Native groups included representatives of all the major cultural groups within Alaska.

DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE ACROSS GROUPS

There was also diversity of experience across the different groups. The Hispanic group represented a relatively new and rapidly growing population within Anchorage with a positive attitude regarding the potential for improving themselves and the community. The African American group represented an older more established, and more stable population. The Caucasian group was composed of people within the community interested in minority and ethnic issues. The Asian group represented the least cohesive population within the community due to the diversity of language and culture within the group. The Pacific Islanders also represented a relatively new and rapidly growing population in the community.

HOW IS ANCHORAGE DOING AS A COMMUNITY? (Education, Public Safety, Housing, Employment, etc.)

Hispanic—Education is good as many come from places with poor educational opportunities. Housing is a challenge because the process of getting a loan is difficult for people with a language barrier. Most jobs were in services with little opportunity for advancement, again language was cited as a barrier.

African American—There was a diversity of views. Some felt there was still considerable discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and education while others expressed more optimism about what was currently happening in Anchorage, either compared to other places or to earlier times within Anchorage.

Asian—Education got high marks from this group, and housing was identified as a problem area, based upon its high cost that had a segregating effect on neighborhoods.

Caucasian—Safety was a common theme among this group. Anchorage is becoming less safe because of community unwillingness to pay for safety related services.

Young Native Women—Awareness of Native issues is increasing and delivery of services by Native corporations is improving services. Access to housing, employment, and health care is growing, but at the same time there are many Natives that cannot meet their basic needs.

Older Natives—This group, having lived and worked in Anchorage for a longer time, was less optimistic. Education and access to housing was improving, but Anchorage was not doing a good job caring for the poor and needy.

Pacific Islanders—Education is very important to this group. They would like to see improvement with ESL (English as a Second Language), as well as with math and science that they say were better where they came from.

HOW DO DIFFERENT RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS DEFINE COMMUNITY? - (Assimilation, Pluralism, or Segregation)

Hispanics—They feel disconnected from the general community by the language barrier and do not unite easily due to differences in country of origin. They feel left out of the more traditional events that help define the community such as Fur Rondy.

African Americans—They are connected through neighborhoods, churches and social organizations but not to the larger community as a whole. They also feel left out of the more traditional events that help define the community such as Fur Rondy.

Caucasians—They see themselves as caring about the overall community and all the people in the community. They see Anchorage as many communities within the larger community rather than a place where others must assimilate. However they are unable to see how to forge common goals for the community out of this pluralism. Many events such as Fur Rondy help to promote a sense of community. (Other ethnic groups felt that they were not invited to participate in some of these traditional events.)

Asians—Like Caucasians they saw an idealized community where different ethnic and racial groups worked together to develop and achieve common goals. However among Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, etc. communities there exist different opinions on what those common goals are.

Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders—They stressed the importance of Native events to educate their community about their culture and to bring them together.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Hispanics—They feel dismissed, ignored and viewed as temporary residents.

African Americans—They reported discrimination that is more racial and hateful.

Caucasians—They saw themselves as the dominant group in the community and did not see how the minority groups fit into the picture in terms of forging common community goals.

Asians—They felt other groups did not understand their need to affirm their culture heritage. Other groups did not recognize the diversity within the Asian community.

Alaska Natives—They felt there was great misunderstanding of their culture and history particularly in areas such as the role and importance of subsistence and the health and social services they receive from the federal government. Others do not understand their positive contributions to Anchorage and Alaska.

Pacific Islanders—They also felt there was misunderstanding of their culture, particularly in the lack of direct eye contact and methods of discipline of their children. They also felt they were often categorized with the Asian community, leading to further misunderstandings.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination today is less institutional and blatant but more subtle and insidious. There are more laws prohibiting discrimination, but they are not always enforced. Groups cope with discrimination through support within their own communities and by trying to education others about their own culture.

Hispanics—Most common sources of discrimination are in police and employment situations, exacerbated by language difficulties.

African Americans—They reported discrimination in the justice system (laws not being enforced), the education system (participation not encouraged), and the media (negative images perpetuate and reinforce discrimination).

Caucasians—They did not experience discrimination but acknowledged its existence in the community. They were at times defensive about the problem, but did not want to be seen as the source of discrimination.

Pacific Islanders—They believed negative media and stereotypes encouraged discrimination against their adolescent children by police and others in authority such as the school administration.

Alaska Natives—They believed discrimination came from negative stereotypes perpetuated through the local media. They saw the source as lack of education about Natives and newcomers to the state.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS—(Taken verbatim from focus group notes)

Mayor should be visibly and actively supportive of efforts to promote diversity in the community.

Municipal government should seek greater representation from ethnic communities in key positions close to the mayor.

Invite and encourage involvement and participation by ethnic minorities in all areas of government.

Help fund a Cultural Center in Anchorage that provides support and educational opportunities for a variety of ethnic communities.

Establish an office in the municipality aimed at supporting ethnic communities and providing them with access to and from the government.

Continue to encourage the dialog with ethnic communities and do a better job of following up with actions and not just words.

Print more documents in Spanish that apply to and help the Hispanic community.

Counteract negative media stereotypes by supporting and encouraging media coverage of activities and events that demonstrate the positive contributions of ethnic minorities to our community.

Provide police with ongoing diversity education and include testing for both understanding and compliance. Demonstrate enforcement and support from top management to ensure recognition by officers that it is a priority with management and the municipal government.

Enforce existing laws fairly. Support pending Hate Crime legislation.

Increase support to expand medical service with special emphasis on increasing dental services that are currently not meeting the needs of many ethnic communities.

Increase minority use of public facilities such as the Library, PAC, and Museum by offering use at an affordable rate.

Encourage the ASD and the University to be more involved with ethnic minority communities. Ask them to take responsibility for outreach into these communities through increase inclusion, communication, and invitations to activities, events and educational opportunities.

Provide leadership in the development of ongoing education programs about diversity in our schools and the community.

Encourage the University to offer more scholarships for ethnic minorities.

Communicate ESL (English as a second language) education opportunities to ethnic communities in their native languages.

Actively encourage the school to invite ethnic minorities to become involved in student government in schools at all grade levels to provide positive role models for their communities.

Actively work to foster pride in all Anchorage residents in the ethnic variety within our community.

Support and sponsor a large annual cultural event to celebrate diversity.

Mayor should work with the media to showcase positive images of the proud ethnic groups that make up the vibrant rainbow of our Anchorage community.

5. SOME QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Is there bias against racial minorities in the local media.

2. Are there differences in perceptions between whites and other racial groups in Anchorage about the well being of racial minorities and how they are treated?

3. What are the most common misconceptions racial and ethnic groups have about each other in the community?

4. What are the detailed demographic, economic, and social characteristics of the different racial and ethnic groups in the community based on the 2000 census?

APPENDIX: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

For this project ISER used the focus group interview approach. Focus groups are interviews of a small number of participants about a common topic or experience. The interviews are lead by a facilitator using a structured discussion guide. "It is a highly effective qualitative data collection technique"[1].

The focus group interview is the preferred design for the following four reasons:

1. Focus group participants are relatively homogenous with respect to their background characteristics. The similarity helps to assure that the participants will not be uncomfortable or afraid to express their perceptions, beliefs or feelings about the questions being asked by the facilitator. What distinguishes focus groups is the presence of the group interaction in response to facilitator's questions. "It is not necessary for the group to reach any kind of consensus. Nor is it necessary for the people to disagree. The object is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others." [2]

2. Focus group interviews also provide some quality controls on data collection in that participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other, which weed out false or extreme views. The group dynamics typically contribute to focusing on the most important topics and issues being discussed. It is fairly easy to assess the extent to which there is a relatively consistent, shared view of the discussion topics among the participants.[3]

3. The focus group interview is an information gathering process that seeks to discover the perceptions and feelings of the participants about a particular topic or experience. Focus groups help to determine the ways

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[1] Patton, Michael Quinn, *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation (Program Evaluation Kit(2nd Ed.),4) Sage Publications, November 1987, p,*

[2] Patton, Michael Quinn, *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation (Program Evaluation Kit(2nd Ed.),4) Sage Publications, November 1987, p 115*

[3] Patton, Michael Quinn ,*How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation (Program Evaluation Kit(2nd Ed.),4) Sage Publications, November 1987, p 109*, p 135

that participants structure their world around the particular topic. The focus group participants respond to the questions in their own words to express their own personal perceptions and perspectives. From the focus group interview we learn how people view the particular topic or experience, hear their terminology and capture the complexities of the individual experiences.[4]

4. Focus group interviews are effective in obtaining in-depth information and reactions to a few questions rather than to get answers or comments to a large number of topics.[5]

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[4] Gredler, Margaret E., *Program Evaluation*, Prenctice Hall, September 1995, p 86

[5] O'Sullivan, Elizabeth, Gary L. Rassel and Gary R. Rassel, *Research Methods for Public Administrators* Second Edition, Addison Wesley Publication Company, November 1994, p 35

Project Implementation

Recruitment

Our recruitment effort was directed at scheduling eight discussion groups. The first five groups were formed around a specific racial or ethnic group. These five groups are: Blacks or African Americans, Caucasian or White, Asians, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics or Latinos. The remaining three groups were for Alaska Natives and American Indians. The three Alaska Native and American Indian groups were stratified by age (i.e. 18 to 39, 40 to 59, and 60+ years of age).

These racial or ethnic groups are how respondents identified themselves in the 2000 census of the Anchorage municipality. We relied on the mayor's Kitchen Cabinet members to provide us with lists of the names of individuals that fell into each racial or ethnic group. From this list ISER recruited four to twelve participants for each group.

The main topics covered in each group come from the six areas identified by the Kitchen Cabinet Task Force: education, employment and economic development, public safety and the justice system, health and social services, community relations, and urban/rural relations. Participants discussed their perceptions of discrimination and experiences with discrimination in Anchorage in these six topic areas.

Screening

ISER developed a screening tool to recruit and select representatives from diverse ethnic and cultural groups to participate in the discussion groups. (A copy of the screening tool is attached to the end of the appendix.) The screener was used to identify individuals who represented a cross section of the ethnic or cultural group and were willing to share their experiences and opinions on race relations in Anchorage. We tried to include people who had knowledge of the current events such as the recent paint ball attacks on Alaska Natives in Anchorage. Individuals who had family members or who lived with someone who worked for ISER, The Municipality of Anchorage, Mayor's office, Equal Rights Commission, any marketing research company, an MOA appointee or a member of the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet were excluded from participation in the focus groups.

ISER attempted to recruit a minimum of twelve individuals for each discussion group. Due to an insufficient number of participants in the 18 to 39 year old group of Alaska Natives, we expanded the age group to include some 40 to 49 year old participants. Similarly with the Alaska Natives who were 60 years of age or higher we had insufficient names to recruit the minimum number.

However, our moderator conducted this group with four participants utilizing more of an interview or key informant format.

Scheduling and Incentive

The discussion groups were conducted from 5:30 pm to 7:00pm and 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm on Monday October 8 and 15 and Tuesday October 9 and 16. A light meal was available at the start of each meeting and a monetary incentive of $50.00 was provided after the discussion to compensate the participants for their time.

Discussion Guide

In preparation for the discussion groups, the facilitator worked with ISER to develop the range of questions to guide the discussion group interview. The discussion guide consists of open-ended questions about the topics of interest to the project team. The guide does not include all the questions in the actual discussion groups; instead it ensures that all topic areas are addressed. (A detailed discussion guide may be found at the end of the appendices.)

Facilitator and Co-Facilitator

ISER contracted the facilitation of the focus groups to Craciun Research Group Incorporated. They pioneered the use of focus groups in Alaska and have conducted projects statewide. Their team of researchers combines both academic and professional expertise in applying skills to a broad variety of research problems. They maintained high quality research standards and have over 15 years experience.

Jean Craciun led each meeting. She ensured that all participants had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. She also guided the discussion to ensure that it stayed focused on the topic of race relations in Anchorage.

A co-facilitator was also present at the discussion group to take notes since it is not practical for the facilitator to both direct the meeting and take notes. The notes helped the participants and the facilitator to see what had been discussed and assisted the facilitator in developing questions to further encourage the discussion. Along with the tape recording of the discussion groups, the written notes also provided the basis for the analysis of what was said at the meetings.

Profile of Discussion Group Participants

Table I. Recruitment

	Number of Names Provided	Number of People Called	Number of Participants Recruited for the Discussion Group	Percentage of People Called Who Were Successfully Recruited
Hispanic	48	45	13	29%
African-American	67	62	13	21%
Caucasian	53	46	12	26%
Asian	59	49	12	25%
Alaska Native and Native American	101	101	24	24%
Pacific-Islanders	21	21	10	48%
Unknown	58	56	0	0
Total	407	380	84	22%

Table I summarizes our recruitment efforts and the results. The Pacific Island group had the highest acceptance rate. We had to call more people in all the remaining ethnic groups to obtain enough participants.

Table II. Participants by Group

Day, Date, and Time	Ethnic or Cultural Group	Total Recruited	Participants	Observers	No-Show	Turned away	Unable to Attend
Monday, October 1, 5:30 pm	Hispanic	13	9	0	2	1	1
Monday, October 1, 7:30 pm	African-American	13	9	0	0	3	1
Tuesday, October 2, 5:30 pm	Caucasian	12	10	0	0	1	1
Tuesday, October 2, 7:30 pm	Asian	12	8	0	2	0	2

Monday, October 8, 5:30 pm	Alaska Native and Native American 18 to 49 years of age	10	6	0	2	0	2
Monday, October 8, 7:30 pm	Alaska Native and Native American 40 to 59 years of age	10	9	0	1	0	0
Tuesday, October 9, 5:30 pm	Alaska Native and Native American 60 or more years of age	4	4	2	0	0	0
Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 pm	Pacific-Islanders	10	8	0	1	0	1
	Total						

Table II shows the number of individuals recruited, those that participated and the reasons for the differences between the two numbers. In the Alaska Native group for those 60 and over there were two observers who were the daughters of one of a participant. The moderator approved their sitting in the group. This group was the most difficult to recruit for due to the short list of names. "No-shows" are individuals who did not call or show up for the focus group although they had previously said they would attend. Potential participants were turned away if they were late and if we had met the maximum capacity for the focus group. This maximum capacity varied from 8 to 10 depending upon the room we were using. Those that were unable to attend had varying reasons including inability to obtain childcare, illness, and other obligations.

Focus Group Screener

Date _____

Interviewer _____

TELEPHONE CALL RECORD

Name:

_____

Telephone Number:

_____

Telephone Number:

_____

Date and Date	Disposition

Hello, is this (Name)_____?

My name is (Your Name) and I am calling from the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. We are working with the Municipality of Anchorage Mayor's office and the Equal Opportunity Commission to find men and women who are interested in giving their opinions regarding race relations in Anchorage.

We would like to invite you to be part of a small discussion group of 8-12 Anchorage residents. The objective of this focus group is to learn what Anchorage residents think about race relations in Anchorage. The meeting will take place:

Day and date: _____

Time: _____

We will serve a light snack and you will be paid $50.00 for your time. Will you be able to attend?

[IF NO] Thank you

[IF YES] Great! We have a couple of general questions for the study to see if you qualify.

1. GENDER

   a. female b. male [HALF AND HALF]

2. I would to confirm your race (RACE)

   a. Black/African American

   b. Hispanic

   c. Asian

   d. Caucasian/White

   e. Pacific Islander

   f. Alaska Native/Native American

3. Are you aware of the recent paint ball attack on Alaska Natives?

   a. yes b. no [TERMINATE]

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: The recent paint ball attacks on Alaska Natives in Anchorage confirms that we live in a racist community. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

[TERMINATE 1 and 5 RESPONSE]

5. Are you currently employed?

   a. yes b. no

6. Which of the following best describes your business, industry or profession?

   a. Financial

   b. Legal

   c. Social Services

   d. Manufacturing

   e. Real Estate

   f. Other _____[ACCEPT ALL]

7. What is your marital status?

   a. Single

   b. Married

   c. Separated

   d. Divorced

   e. Widow

8. Are you at least 18 years of age?

   a. yes [CONTINUE] b. no [TERMINATE]

I Is your age between (READ RANGES)?

a. 18 to 29

b. 30 to 39

c. 40 to 49

d. 50 to 59

e. 60 to 69

f. 70 or more

9. Have you participated in a marketing research focus group? [IN THE LAST YEAR]

a. yes [TERMINATE] B. no [CONTINUE]

10. Do you, a family member, or anyone you live with work for ISER, MOA [MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE] Mayor's office, Equal Rights Commission, marketing research company, is a MOA appointee or a member of the Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet?

a. yes [TERMINATE] B. no [CONTINUE]

11. In the focus group we will attempt to learn from your personal experiences. Do you have opinions on race relations in the Municipality of Anchorage?

a. yes

b. no [TERMINATE]

c. maybe

d. don't know/no answer

We will be conducting the focus group at

Anchorage City Hall

632 West 6th Avenue

Room 830-Mayor's conference room

Room 700-Training room

[PROVIDE DIRECTIONS AS NEEDED]

Parking is available on the south side if the City Hall and there are metered spaces along the street. Parking Enforcements stops at 6pm.

Review meeting information

Day of the Week _____

Date_____

Time _____

Please arrive at 5:15 pm the group will begin promptly at 5:30 pm.

Please arrive at 7:15 pm the group will begin promptly at 7:30 pm.

We will be serving a light snack. The session begins promptly at pm so please be there 15 minutes early. No one is allowed to enter the session once it has begun. If you have any questions, please call ISER at 786-7710. We will give you a reminder call, so could I have your day and evening phone umbers?

[REPEAT THEIR NAME] _____

Day phone _____

Evening phone _____

Focus Group Discussion Guide

I. INTRODUCTION:

Today we are here to gain a better understanding of people's life experiences. You are a group of individuals representing a significant population of our community. I would appreciate learning a little bit about your experiences living and working in Anchorage. I am also interested in your quality of life, and want to get your opinions regarding education, housing, employment, as well as community issues like safety and ethnic/racial discrimination.

II. WARM-UP: General Discussion of Community and Ethnic Groups

Let's begin with the big picture. We really do not need any detail at this time, but rather general comments.

1. How long have you been living in Anchorage?

2. I would like to hear any general thoughts you might have on how well Anchorage is doing providing education, housing, employment, things like that? Again, in general, and for each, is it: getting better, worse, or staying the same?

3. Today we will be talking about uncomfortable experiences groups of people have in our city but let's begin with some positive experiences you have living here. Anyone?

4. Could you help me understand what community events you like to attend that are specific to cultural groups. Can you tell me the names of ones specifically for your (ethnic) community (or that you like to attend).

5. What does community mean to you? (or what does it mean within your cultural or ethnic group)?

III. IN-DEPTH: Individual & Community Cohesion;

1. What is your opinion of the relationship between your own ethnic community (or community of friends) and the whole town?

A) In general, do people get along?

B) Does everyone have the same goals for Anchorage?

C) What are the greatest needs or biggest problems? Right now!

D) Do you feel alone in your view or is it shared by others?

[WATCH FOR: Unaided experiences with racism, discrimination, isolation, alienation reverse discrimination, etc. Are they connected or separated from their own ethnic group? (do they identify with their own ethnic group?) Are they assimilated into the whole community or more isolated and uninvolved?]

2. Regarding problems, how are groups of people, perhaps even your group, misunderstood? In your group, do you have a way that you support each other? If your community of friends gets upset or something happens WHAT DO PEOPLE DO?

3. Let's think back to our own individual experiences, times when you felt uncomfortable, when you thought you might be getting different treatment here because of someone else's problem with you--either how you acted, your skin color, your tone of voice, your accent, the group of friends you were with?—We have all had these kinds of experiences, can anyone talk about it?

4. When these type of events occur, how do you respond, or do you respond at all? Do you: get angry, tell a friend, reach out, specifically what do we do?. Is there a trusted group of people, community resource you can turn to?

5. Where do you experience the most discrimination? Racism? Can you give me an example? {Read from article or tell stories of friends personal discrimination experiences. Ask for details and how they reacted to it.}

6. [AS TIME ALLOWS: Does anyone remember a hot issue for our community, that had racial/ethnic implications? WATCH FOR: Paintball incident] What was your reaction to all that?

IV. IN-DEPTH: Strategies for Coping with Discrimination

1. Let's switch our attention as a group to solutions, if you will, what are some ways you tried to cope with and changed that uncomfortable situation for the better?, Or what are some ideas for making changes for the better? Does anyone wish to share?

2. How do you get over an uncomfortable situation?

3. Tell me about strategies you have heard, or stories that have worked for other groups of people?

4. What ideas do you have about the type of community you want Anchorage to be?

5. How do you involve other people or organizations (other ethnic groups) in solving the problem of discrimination.

V. IN-DEPTH: Government Responsibility to Cultural Diversity

1. What do you think our city should do about any of these problems or discriminating experiences people are having?

2. How can the people of Anchorage help everyone have the respect they desire?

3. How should we deal with people who don't understand or care about bringing our community together? And what can you suggest to help them understand your situation?

VI. WRAP-UP:

Since the Mayor's Task Force is very concerned about recent events in our town and wants to make recommendations to the Mayor. what is the single most important piece of advice that you could suggest?

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